

TO FOSTER CHANGE

A Public Media Initiative

Across America, public television is an essential institution that examines important issues, reveals cutting-edge science, invites us to world class performances, and teaches our kids. PBS SoCal is that institution for Southern California. Today, PBS SoCal is the top-rated and most-watched public television station in Greater Los Angeles and the third most-watched PBS station in the nation. Our signal reaches eighteen million viewers in Santa Barbara, the Inland Empire, Orange County, and Los Angeles County. Over forty years, PBS SoCal has harnessed this broadcast influence to lead collaborative local initiatives addressing childhood issues from early education to dropout prevention. Together with our supporters and nonprofit partners, we nurture a more connected Southern California.

In 2014, PBS SoCal brought these partners together to assess the role public media plays in the lives of children. We heard our community testify to the power of PBS SoCal's education initiatives and ask for a greater commitment to Southern California foster youth. PBS SoCal discovered a great and pressing need for a public that understood their most vulnerable children. Of all children in foster care in California, 55% call PBS SoCal's service area home. One in five is proficient in English, and three in four are performing below grade level. When foster youth leave care, less than half report any earnings. In Southern California, a great deal of work is underway to improve the lives of foster youth. As part of our deep commitment to young people, PBS SoCal is joining these urgent efforts. We will contribute our expertise in mass media, trusted storytelling, and community engagement to raise awareness of the plight of our foster youth. In doing so, PBS SoCal fulfills our purpose to "restate and clarify the social dilemma," as E. B. White wrote to Congress when he made the case for public television in 1966.

To Foster Change is a new and major three-year initiative of PBS SoCal that will raise awareness in the larger public of the systemic challenges, personal plights, and success stories that foster youth experience. By exploring the people and issues involved from many points of view, PBS SoCal will expand the somewhat limited narrative about foster youth, clarify misconceptions, and begin demystifying the foster care system for those outside of it. The mission of To Foster Change is to foster understanding, inspire hope, and motivate actions that contribute to more positive life outcomes for Southern California foster youth. In addition to raising public awareness, PBS SoCal will support and encourage caregivers, promote the work of effective service organizations, share positive stories, create a space to brainstorm new approaches to supporting youth, and train small group of young adults to tell their own stories through media production. Led by a director with twenty-five years of experience serving local foster youth, this initiative is based on the proven public media model of convening, creating content, and working directly with youth.

Convening

In each year of this three-year initiative, PBS SoCal will host a conversation between stakeholders, service providers, schools, government officials, and families to discuss key issues, generate ideas, and motivate collaborations. The focus will be on how public media storytelling—on-air, online, and in the community— can enhance the work that is already being done. PBS SoCal will convene fifty participants each year. Immediately after each meeting, PBS SoCal will survey participants to capture the new ideas and personal connections sparked by the conversation. A few months later, PBS SoCal will follow up with participants to discover whether attendees put any new ideas to practice.

Page 1 of 2 10/7/2016

The first To Foster Change summit will take place on October 26, 2016. PBS SoCal's foster youth team met with sixty-four stakeholders and agencies across Southern California to prepare for the first convening. Participants helped shape the agenda through these conversations and pre-summit questionnaires. This conversation will identify partners, shape future summits, and help inform original documentary content.

Content

The hallmark of PBS is masterfully telling stories with depth and substance. PBS SoCal will write and produce three one-hour documentaries during this initiative. These local documentaries will focus on telling the story of foster youth in Los Angeles. Possible topics might be the challenges facing transition age youth, teen mothers who are foster children themselves, crossover youth, and the demands of the caregiver experience. PBS SoCal will convene a Content Advisory Board to ensure the editorial integrity of these productions. Along with documentaries, PBS SoCal will broadcast nine Public Service Announcements. PBS SoCal will also acquire content from independent local producers. PBS SoCal has a vast network of talented local producers and receives fifty submissions per month. PBS SoCal will request submissions in line with the mission of To Foster Change. This will allow independent local producers to contribute their voices to this initiative. We trust our audience to rally around Southern California foster youth: national Scarborough reports show that PBS viewers are 58% more likely to contribute to a cultural organization and 73% more likely to donate time or money to causes.

In October, PBS SoCal launches a To Foster Change website that will host digital stories that highlight local organizations working with foster youth in Southern California. Viewers who are inspired by To Foster Change content will be directed to ways they can help. The website will also feature content created by foster youth as part of PBS SoCal's community engagement.

Community Engagement

Through To Foster Change, PBS SoCal will engage transition age foster youth in storytelling and offer them a place to express themselves. PBS SoCal will seek local partners to assist in student production trainings for foster youth. The goal is to provide opportunities for students to receive one-on-one mentorship and career exposure-valuable in a city where 1 in 7 jobs are in the creative industries. Throughout the initiative, 75 transition age youth will participate in a two-day hands-on filmmaking workshop led by professionals and educators in the field. They will learn about script development, production, directing, camera work, and editing. Members of this group will be chosen to participate in the production of content for the To Foster Change website. With the support of a local producer, a small group of foster youth from the production workshops will be invited to produce web content for PBS SoCal.

In January 2016, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation granted PBS SoCal \$1.7 million over three years as the lead gift for this important \$3.4 million initiative. We are reaching out to the philanthropic community as we seek funding for the remaining \$1.7 million so that we may positively affect the fate of foster children regionally and even nationally.

PBS was founded on the belief that television can do more, especially for our most vulnerable populations. Over half of California's foster youth live in PBS SoCal's service area. We are committed to sharing their stories. In the end, we hope the initiative will result in better life outcomes for foster youth by inspiring the sharing of ideas and collaborative problem-solving in the foster youth community. Beyond this community, PBS SoCal will provide public with information on ways to get involved to better the life outcomes of foster youth. By supporting To Foster Change, you will join a coalition of leaders committed to deepening awareness and understanding of our most vulnerable youth.

Together, our work will inspire hope, action and - ultimately - change.

Page 2 of 2 10/7/2016